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# VOA Employees Gain Hill Access, Boris Gets Boot

The Kremlin has devoted considerable energy to denouncing the Voice of America and jamming its broadcasts to eastern Europe. But the Soviets unwittingly did the VOA a favor last year. Here's the untold story:

For 33 years, VOA correspondents had been denied access to congressional press galleries. Longstanding rules barred government officials from accreditation, a move intended to prevent them from using press passes to buttonhole members of Congress in the Capitol corridors.

But correspondents for foreign government press agencies, like the British Broadcasting Corp. and the Soviet news agency, Tass, were exempt from the exclusionary rule. The correspondents' committee that handles accreditation had accepted them at the urging of the State Department back in the 1940s.

Enter Boris Ivanov, a Tass correspondent who had held congressional credentials for several years.

On April 22, 1983, Sen. John P. East (R-N.C.) sent a letter to Sen. Charles McC. Mathias Jr. (R-Md.), chairman of the Rules and Admin-

istration Committee. East stamped his letter "secret." He wrote:

"An employee of the Soviet news agency Tass, and an accredited member of the Senate press gallery, Boris Ivanov, is in fact an officer or agent of the Soviet intelligence service, the KGB." East added that he didn't think it was "appropriate for a Soviet spy to enjoy the privileges of the members of a free press."

Then the senator got to the point: "Nor do I believe that it is appropriate for an arm of the Soviet propaganda machine such as Tass to have representatives in the press gallery of the Senate, especially since the Voice of America itself has never been granted such privileges on the grounds that it is a government news agency."

East concluded: "Tass is also a government news agency, yet it has full press credentials in the Senate, even though some of its employees, and Ivanov in particular, have long been known to be intelligence officers under cover."

On May 4 Mathias got another letter—from Sen. Jesse Helms (R-N.C.) and 49 other senators, urging a waiver of the Senate rule banning VOA correspondents. They said that denying the VOA press credentials hampered its congressional mandate to be an "accurate, comprehensive and objective source of news."

Mathias held a hearing that didn't resolve the matter. The correspon-

dents' committee raised its longstanding fear that VOA accreditation could open the floodgates to flacks for every government agency in Washington.

But, faced with the confrontation East and Helms were obviously threatening—Tass versus the VOA, Soviet spies versus American patriots—the committee prudently agreed to a compromise. VOA correspondents were accredited, though without a vote in the correspondents' association and other privileges the Soviets enjoy.

And Ivanov? Mathias relayed East's charges to the FBI. Last fall, Ivanov discreetly departed.

A Soviet Embassy spokesman shrugged off East's accusation as a routine allegation, and said Ivanov did not leave with "any embarrassment at all." He told my associate Dale Van Atta, "Boris left for good because he had completed successfully his duty here."

**Eye on the Economy:** President Reagan's sobriquet, the Great Communicator, is often used to explain his success at persuasion. How, then, do you explain similar success by Federal Reserve Board Chairman Paul A. Volcker? Treasury officials and congressional staff members call him the Great Non-Communicator, charging that he is a master of long-winded obfuscation. Yet these same critics concede that Volcker, too, is a master of persuasion.